



# *Iowa Outdoors*

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources**  
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**Nov. 29, 2005**

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## **LIVE HIGGINS-EYE FOUND IN THE WAPSI**

GUTTENBERG – Genetic tests have confirmed what fisheries biologists from Iowa and the Genoa National Fish Hatchery had hoped. The mussel found in the Wapsipinicon River, near Central City in Linn County, was, in fact, a Higgins-Eye Pearly mussel. It is the first live Higgins-eye found in interior Iowa waters in more than 80 years.

Finding the mussel is the culmination of a project that began in 2001 by the Iowa DNR, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to re-establish the endangered Higgins-eye.

Biologists at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery would inoculate the gills of walleye and smallmouth bass fingerlings with mussels in the larval stage and release the fish in the Wapsipinicon, Cedar, and Iowa rivers, and in the Mississippi River.

The larvae stays attached to the gills from anywhere from a few days to months until it reaches a stage where it drops off and begins living as a free mussel. Biologists must wait for years until the mussels grow large enough to be found. And where the mussel drops is only a guess. “It’s like finding a needle in a haystack,” said Scott Gritters, fisheries biologist with the Iowa DNR.

The 3-inch long Higgins-eye appears to have dropped off a walleye that had been inoculated. Biologists will return to the Wapsipinicon next summer see if other Higgins-eye Pearly mussels are in the same area.

Gritters said the mussel was found this past summer during the weeklong mussel survey on the three interior Iowa rivers.

**For more information, contact Scott Gritters, at 563-252-1156, or Tony Brady and Roger Gordon at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery at 608-689-2605.**

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[Hold until Dec. 1]

## **SHOTGUN DEER SEASON IS COMING**

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Iowa's woods and fields will be dotted with orange this weekend, as the state's shotgun deer seasons get underway. Saturday is opening day for 75,000 first season hunters. A week later, about 60,000 hunters—including landowners who did not fill their first season tag—take their turn during second season.

With a generous allotment of antlerless tags this year, deer hunters should break the harvest record, set last year when 194,512 whitetails were taken over all seasons. However, the largest share of that harvest occurs over the two shotgun seasons, December 3-7 and December 10-18. "It should be another real good year this year. We are looking at a harvest of about 200,000," forecasts Willy Suchy, deer biologist for the Department of Natural Resources. "The increase should be from the antlerless tags. Our goal is to get the deer population down to where it was a couple years ago. We need to increase the doe harvest by a little bit more this year."

Hunters have responded to the call. In each of the last two seasons, they harvested more does than bucks: a first in 50 years of modern deer hunting in Iowa. Many of those whitetails were tagged with special antlerless tags, from a county's designated allotment. Those county quotas are pegged to local deer numbers and the push to steer more hunting pressure to areas with surplus deer. "If your party would start the day and fill some doe tags, you could then be really selective on the type of bucks you shoot," urges Suchy. "The bucks you pass up this year are going to be the trophies *next* year."

Iowa's shotgun seasons are 'party' hunts for the most part; anyone may tag a deer taken by another hunter in his or her party. However, deer must be tagged within 15 minutes of being killed or before they are moved, whichever comes first. Party hunting has proven efficient over the years, with some hunters posted as blockers along deer escape routes, as other hunters 'drive' an area. "To be effective, you have to understand where deer are likely to go," suggests Suchy. "Utilize the terrain and the wind. Deer like to go upwind or 'cross wind.' Setting up your drive to take advantage of the conditions is

an important element of the hunt.”

At the same time, it’s not a bad idea to break with tradition occasionally. Suchy suggests slowing down the pace of a drive, rather than rushing through a timber in a ‘forced march.’

“Deer are very adaptable. Crop patterns change a lot and that will influence deer movement,” observes Suchy. “Look through some of those out-of-the-way places; brushy fence rows, the backside of a pond or a terrace. Usually some of the nicer deer tend to hang out in areas like the corner of a field or in CRP acres and watch traditional drives go by.”

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## **SAFETY FIRST, DEER HUNTERS**

DES MOINES – The first of Iowa’s two shotgun deer seasons opens Dec. 3, and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources estimates more than 75,000 hunters will be in the field.

Rod Slings, recreation safety program supervisor with the Iowa DNR, said deer hunters need to maintain the good safety record they established from 2004. “We had zero fatalities and the lowest number of incidents on record,” Slings said. “We want to maintain hunting as the safe sport it is.”

Slings said hunting incidents occur most often when somebody decides to do something different than the plan. “Layout your hunt. Discuss how the hunt will proceed and outline each person’s role, including where everyone will be at all times,” Slings said. “Plan your hunt, and hunt your plan.”

Good investigations of past hunting incidents show the number one factor contributing to hunter injuries is shooting at a running deer. “Hunters need to know their target and what is behind their target. When they shoot at a running deer, they do not know what is behind their target and that is when hunters get injured,” Slings said.

One way to help identify a hunter is to wear blaze orange. Iowa law requires deer hunters to wear external, solid blaze orange that covers the torso: a vest, jacket, coat, sweatshirt, sweater, shirt or coveralls. Simply wearing a blaze orange hat for deer hunting does not meet the minimum requirement.

“The sandwich style blaze orange vest does not show much from the side,” Slings said. “We want you to be seen from 360 degrees. Adding a hat helps you to be seen. The more blaze orange, the better the chance that you will be seen.”

Iowa's second shotgun deer season begins Dec. 10 and an estimated 60,000 hunters will be participating.

**For more information, contact Mick Klemesrud at 515-281-8653 or Alan Foster at 515-281-8874.**

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## **DNR TO CHECK DEER FOR CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE**

DES MOINES – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources plans to collect 4,500 samples from wild Iowa deer to look for the presence of Chronic Wasting Disease. This is the fourth year for the program, and so far more than 13,000 deer samples have been tested with no positive samples.

The DNR plans to collect 3,500 of the deer in northeast Iowa that borders Wisconsin and Illinois, and the remainder from the rest of the state. There will be a few check stations in the high priority area, but most samples will be collected from meat lockers.

Hunters willing to donate a sample should call their area wildlife management biologist. Contact information is listed in the 2005/06 Iowa Hunting and Trapping Regulations.

**For more information, contact Willie Suchy at 641-774-2958.**

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## **YOUTH ONLY DEER HUNT IS A SUCCESS**

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

The steep, muddy terrain made for poor footing as Derrick Large and mentor Dean Mueller hiked a half-mile off the trail. Noting blaze orange to the north and east, they finally picked a ridge top along the west edge of Springbrook State Park. They were out of range of the nearby hunters, but were left with good shooting in one direction, perhaps as deer left the park for the nearby field late in the day.

Except the deer detoured *in from* that direction. The doe and two fawns fast-walked along the muddy slope as Large brought the 12-gauge shotgun up to his shoulder. One of the smaller deer offered the best shot. The first one brought it down. A subsequent shot finished it...and the 13-year-old West Des Moines youth had his deer. "It

feels pretty good. (My) first one,” smiled Large. “They described what it would be like out here. It helped a lot.”

‘They’ were the officers and biologists who had taken Large and 24 other novice hunters through the ropes for the previous day during Springbrook’s instructional deer hunt. With a whitetail population in need of thinning, and a list of prospective hunters and mentors, the park/education center was a natural location. Only antlerless deer could be taken. “We give them a quality outdoor experience and allow them to explore the sport of deer hunting,” explained coordinator A. Jay Winter of the Department of Natural Resources. “We bring them into the classroom. We take them outdoors, to the shooting range and outdoor courses. Then send them out into the woods.”

The mentors are the key. Most were fathers there with a son or daughter. There was also a grandpa, an uncle and a family friend or two. Last year, a first-time hunting mom was on board. In some cases, the mentor was a volunteer who had not met his ‘charge’ until Friday. Some novices themselves, some veteran hunters; each mentor sat through the Friday evening/Saturday morning sessions and stayed at the side of the youth hunter throughout the weekend. A \$100 registration fee and valid deer tag were required for each hunter, many of which were sponsored by outdoor groups. Hunters, mentors and most instructors bunked and ate at the DNR’s Education Center.

Some, like Large, had only to wait an hour or two. Others like Brent Smith headed back out Sunday. The 13-year-old, quickly nicknamed ‘Schmooze’ because of his mile-wide smile and sense of humor, had muzzleloader woes. Midday Sunday, though, his powder flashed. “He popped out from the ravine and I watched him come in to about 40 yards,” recalled Smith, from Pella. “He worked into a clear spot...and I shot him when he came through.” With multiple ‘coaches,’ Smith field dressed his deer and looked back. “It’s a really nice place. There’s tons of wildlife. It’s nice and quiet. You get a lot of professional help...very friendly,” he said.

For 16 of the kids, it meant going home with their first whitetail, or donating it to the HUSH program. But this was a time when you didn’t really have to fire a shot. “The success is measured in the quality of the experience,” assessed Winter. “Everyone is going away happy.” Plans are already underway for next year’s Springbrook session, with an eye out for an eastern Iowa hunt, too.

### **Third Time’s a Charm**

I might be slow, but I catch on eventually. Most hunters and deer follow the axiom that deer usually walk into or across the wind, not *with* it. Yet, twice this bow season, I had my back to the breeze as a nice eight-point buck interrupted his afternoon nap to come out to the pond below me for a drink...with the west wind tickling his tail. Each time I heard him, he was less than 15 yards away. The safety strap and tree trunk kept me from making the 180-degree turn in time.

Figuring we hadn't read the same book, I played it his way a few days ago and set up facing west. Right on schedule, 40 minutes before sunset, he began picking his way out of the multiflora choked ravine. With thirty seconds notice, I had the bow drawn as he approached the opening I had trimmed away, 15 yards below. The buck took four or five bounds after the hit...wobbled for a minute on the dam...and dropped. Even the drag out was going to be easy!

So much for going by the book.

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## **WILD GAME BRINGS TASTE AND TRADITION TO HOLIDAY SEASON**

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

For Iowa's early settlers, a successful winter hunt often meant the difference between being fed and going hungry. Even those who did not actually hunt for themselves still used wild game as a frequent source of protein. The main difference between those folks and the hunters was that "store keeps and school marms" usually procured their venison from the local market instead of a nearby woodland.

We no longer hunt to survive. Nevertheless, the art procuring and preparing wild game remains a vital link to our cultural past. Many of us still enjoy traditional holiday banquets that feature wild game as a central focus. Wild turkey for Thanksgiving. Roast Canada goose for Christmas.

Unfortunately, many cooks - even some of the very good ones - are unduly intimidated by the prospect of preparing a wild game dinner. Don't be. The fact that wild game is different than the food you buy shrink wrapped at the store, does not automatically mean that it is difficult to cook. It's not. With practice and patience you may even discover that preparing wild game can almost be as much fun as bagging it in the first place. You'll know you've arrived when shotgun ammo becomes a routine sidebar to your weekly grocery list.

Whether you're fixing fried rabbit, roast canvasback duck, or grilled venison, all game dishes should be approached with the idea of enhancing, rather than destroying, the meat's natural flavor. If the objective is to make everything on the table taste "just like chicken," then you should buy chicken in the first place.

Since wild game is leaner than domestic cuts, cooking times are generally much shorter. All game should be considered ready to eat the very second the juices run clear. Anything more will put your meal on the road to disaster. Regardless of age, wild game only becomes tough or dry when someone makes it that way. The only meat that was

meant to be incinerated is a campfire hotdog.

As you begin preparing your game dinner, don't be afraid to experiment. New recipes are fun to invent; and variety will add the spice of life to your hard earned, wild game entrees. That does not mean, however, that your dishes need to be complicated.

The following recipes are three of my favorites. All are simple to prepare and guaranteed to make your friends and family smile.

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### Texas Mesquite Grilled Venison

1 1/2 pounds venison tenderloin  
16 ounces catsup  
8 ounces tomato sauce  
1/4 cup Worcestershire sauce  
1/4 cup lemon juice  
1 Tablespoon liquid smoke  
2 Tablespoons brown sugar  
1 small onion, chopped  
Cayenne powder to taste

Cut venison tenderloin into 2-inch medallions, 3/4 inch thick. Combine rest of ingredients for barbecue sauce. [Cayennes are optional, although my Texas friends won't like it if you leave them out.] Heat sauce. Place venison in covered grill over medium-hot bed of mesquite coals. Cook three minutes and turn. Cook an additional three to four minutes, taking care not to over do. Remove meat from grill. Smother venison in barbecue and serve.

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### Chesapeake Barbecued Canada Goose

1 whole, plucked Canada goose  
1/2 pound butter  
1/2 cup catsup  
1 Tablespoon sugar  
1 1/2 Tablespoons Worcestershire sauce  
1 1/2 Tablespoons lemon juice  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2 cloves garlic, pressed [may sub. 1/8 tsp. garlic powder.]  
1/4 tsp. Tabasco [optional]  
1/2 tsp. salt  
ground pepper to taste

Bank two large beds of charcoal on opposite sides of covered grill. When coals are hot

place goose, breast up, in center of grill and cover. [To add color and create a more robust flavor try placing a handful of hickory or mesquite chips on top of coals.] Cooking time for a large Canada goose is approximately 1 1/2 hours. Time will vary slightly due to ambient temperature.

For sauce: combine the rest of ingredients and slowly simmer in saucepan for five to ten minutes.

After an hour and twenty minutes begin testing goose with small probe. When juice runs clear, immediately remove bird from grill. Carve meat and place into covered dish.

Smother in Chesapeake sauce. Serve with wild rice, cooked mushrooms, and red currant jelly on the side. If this recipe does not become an immediate favorite, have your taste buds checked by a qualified physician.

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### Chinese Ring-neck Stir Fry

Many popular oriental dishes actually originated as pheasant recipes. While this one is just a bit more complicated than the previous recipes, you'll find it well worth the extra effort.

2 pheasant breast fillets  
1 med. or large onion, sliced  
4 or 5 green onions, chopped  
1/2 pound fresh, halved mushrooms  
1 green pepper, sliced or chopped [a red or yellow pepper will add color]  
1 head cut broccoli  
3 or 4 garlic cloves, chopped  
1 or 2 cayenne peppers [optional]  
6 ounces Chinese pea pods  
4 Roma tomatoes, sliced lengthwise [optional]  
2-Tablespoons brown sugar  
2-tsp. corn starch  
4 Tablespoons soy sauce  
2 Tablespoons water  
1 Tablespoon cooking oil

Cut pheasant breasts into one-inch cubes. For sauce: combine brown sugar, cornstarch, soy sauce, and water. Set meat and sauce to side.

Preheat wok [very hot]; add cooking oil. Put 1/2 of a garlic or cayenne pepper in oil and cook for 20 or 30 seconds. Add green peppers. Cook for three minutes. Add pea pods and mushrooms. Cook for three or four minutes. [Sparingly add more oil as necessary during cooking.] Add broccoli. Cook for three minutes. Add all onions. Cook until all vegetables are crispy tender. Remove and place in covered dish. [If you're using tomatoes place them, uncooked, on top of vegetables in dish.]

Reheat wok [very hot]; add two tablespoons of oil. Place remainder of garlic or cayenne in oil; cook for 30 seconds. Place 1/2 of pheasant in wok and cook for three minutes.

Add remainder of pheasant; cook approximately three minutes. Drain oil and cook meat under high flame until it begins to brown, [Be careful it does not dry out]. Push meat to



side of wok. Add sauce. Stir until sauce is bubbly and begins to thicken. Reduce flame, quickly stir pheasant pieces into sauce. Add vegetables; stir thoroughly. Serve with brown rice or Chinese noodles.

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## **NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION TO MEET IN DES MOINES**

DES MOINES - The Natural Resource Commission (NRC) of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will meet at 8:30 a.m., Thursday, Dec. 8, in the fourth floor conference room, Wallace State Office Bldg., in Des Moines. The meeting is open to the public.

Members of the NRC are Joan Schneider, Randy Duncan, Carol Kramer, Richard Francisco, Janice Marcantonio, Lennis Moore and Liz Garst. The DNR Director is Jeffrey Vonk.

The following is the agenda for the December meeting.

- Approve Agenda
- Approve Minutes of Nov. 10 Meeting
- Director's Remarks
- Construction Projects
- Land Acquisition
  - Barringer Slough, Clay County – Swan
  - Ryan Lake Wildlife Management Area, Emmet County – Paulson
  - Cedar Rock, Buchanan County - Cannon
- Meeting Dates and Locations for 2006
- Management Agreement with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Pine Creek, Clayton County
- Cooperative Agreement with Duck Unlimited
- Conservation and Recreation Donations
- DNR State Land Timber Harvest Review Process
- Mines of Spain 28E Agreement
- River Otter and Bobcat Population Status
- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 40, Boating Speed and Distance Zoning
- General Discussion
- Items for Next Meeting, Feb. 9, in Des Moines

**For more information, contact Karyn Stone at 515-281-8650.**

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